

Soviet Spy Switch

The United States Central Intelligence Agency is not the only espionage agency that has trouble with its image and its superiors. The CIA has had three directors since the Bay of Pigs episode of 1961, and has been the subject of critical review by the executive branch, increased scrutiny by Congress, and considerable debate by a public alternately fascinated and repelled by a supersecret spy outfit.

In Moscow, the renowned KGB—Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti or State Security Committee to be precise—has just gotten a new director, and the assumption is that too many (visible) goofs were the signal for his predecessor's removal. ~~Mikhail~~ Stalin got away in a dazzle of publicity, but also within the last two months nine Soviet citizens have been accused of espionage and expelled from Italy, Belgium, The Netherlands, Cyprus, and Greece. Two KGB men visiting the United States lost their cover and were instead covered with withering humor by the press throughout their stay.

The new director, Yuri V. Andropov, is a close associate of party chairman Brezhnev, and his appointment is seen as a continuation of a policy of close party control over an agency that once became a disturbingly independent political force. Andropov's successor, Vladimir Semichastny, was an associate of Aleksandr Shelepin, of the "conservative" or hardline faction. The change is thus interpreted as a strengthening of the dominant middle-of-the-road Brezhnev faction.

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